

**CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AMENITIES AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2022 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Cllr M McBride Chair
Cllr K Wood Vice-Chair

Cllr K Baldwin (from item 20)
Cllr J Bull (ex-officio)
Cllr R Crapper
Cllr P Handley
Cllr N King
Cllr N Leverton (ex-officio)
Cllr L Little
Cllr D Wesson

In attendance: 8 x members of the public

Officers: Kay Linnington – Deputy Clerk
Lyndy Dennis – Admin Officer

16 APOLOGIES

There were none.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022, previously circulated, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair. Cllr Little abstained as she had left before the end of the meeting.

19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident had written to the Council with suggestions for improvements to Willow Meadows, to be considered at Item 22 on the agenda. She had noticed that the number of flora and fauna species had declined in recent years and was pleased to see that BBOWT had conducted a survey. She would be interested to know if the meadows could be enhanced for more people to enjoy whilst maintaining the conservation status.

Another resident also spoke on Willow Meadows. The meadows are a fantastic facility being enjoyed by more and more people in recent times and more could be done to improve it whilst protecting the habitat. There are rare orchids that grow there and only three have been counted this year. She expressed concern over the water table and drainage. Whilst it was disappointing that the Council had not addressed their concerns over the last couple of years, they were pleased to see the work that has been done recently to maintain the meadows.

Cllr Leverton confirmed that the Council were working with BBOWT and a survey report was awaited for both Willow Meadows and The Dell.

20 PUMP TRACK

A presentation was given by two Year 8 students, who would like to build a Pump Track on the unused green space to the front of the Skate Park. They showed pictures of the area and examples of pump tracks, together with their proposed design. The track would include areas to cater for different abilities and would have various slopes and turns. A concrete track would be suitable for cycles, skateboards and scooters, as well as being easier to maintain. It would provide good exercise and support mental health. Their friends and other users of the skate park were very much in support of this idea. There is an old BMX track area to the rear of the skate park that is overgrown and only suitable for older age groups.

A discussion took place. It was questioned whether the proposed location, near the road and car park, would be the best place and suggested refurbishing the existing BMX track. It was suggested that a working group is formed and that the young people be included as the project evolves.

The committee thanked the young people for their presentation. It was RECOMMENDED that a working group is formed to look at the project, which would consist of Cllr Bull, Cllr Handley, Cllr King and Cllr Little.

21 PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

A presentation was given by Cllr King putting forward a project to refurbish the play areas in Carterton. Based on her own experience of being the parent of three children, feedback from her Facebook page and other parents, together with research into other play areas in Oxfordshire. The parks should cater for all age groups and abilities. She put forward four objectives:

- (a) Set up a working group consisting of a mix of town councillors and members of the public.
- (b) Seek Council approval that the ARRG Playground be the first project, aiming to complete it by the summer holidays in 2023.
- (c) Look at all the other parks in order of priority, liaising with the MOD and Brize Norton village for the parks they maintain.
- (d) Look at how these projects could be funded.

Regarding the ARRG playground, the majority of people would like to see the park enclosed by a fence. Other ideas were a good selection of equipment for all ages and abilities, new safety surface printed with bright colours and games (woodchip removed), more seating and shaded areas, more bins, a large climbing frame in the centre, trampolines.

The second priority would be The Dell. Feedback has been that it is seen as an area that attracts antisocial behaviour. She suggested employing a graffiti artist to make the park more modern, more benches and sheltered areas to make it usable all year round, a trim trail leading down into the Dell area. Improvements to The Dell to include a wildlife trail sign along the walkway, bug hotels etc to encourage wildlife, and benches along the route.

The third priority would be Swinbrook Road Recreation Ground and park, together with two other smaller play areas.

A discussion took place. It was noted that fully accessible play equipment is expensive. A professional company should be involved to put together some options and costings. It was generally felt that the project was a good idea and that some progress could be made by the summer of 2023, but such a large project would be unlikely to be completed in that timeframe. Cllr Baldwin would like to be on the Working Group and that the Pump Track should be included in this group. Contributions from future housing developers should be prepared for. A member of the public raised the issue of having nearby toilet facilities, sensory equipment suitable for children and adults with disabilities.

The Committee were generally in favour of the project going ahead and advice would be sought from the Town Clerk on how to move forward.

22 WILLOW MEADOWS

To discuss suggestions from residents, circulated with the agenda. The Covid outbreak has increased the use of the meadows and reminded everyone what a valued area it is for Carterton. The following was suggested:

- Better protection of the water table and wetland, which has attracted egrets in recent years.
- A wildlife area, with a sympathetic play space for children and seating.
- Preservation and maintenance of areas to walk dogs and a track for joggers, walkers, prams and wheelchairs etc.
- Extension of the boardwalk to reduce trampling during the winter.
- A charity-run coffee hut.
- Set up of a 'Friends' group.

A discussion took place around the importance of striking a balance between access and protecting the environment. Information boards would guide people on what to look out for as they walk through the meadow.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting at Item 19, a survey had taken place by BBOWT and a report is awaited with their recommendations. The matter would be discussed further once the report was received.

23 WORKS FOR AUTHORISATION

- (a) Replacement of Boiler – Streatfield House. Following the annual gas inspection of Town Council buildings, it was recommended that the boiler, which was installed approximately 35 years ago, should be replaced. Three quotes were obtained to replace the boiler but the item was deferred to the next meeting of the full Council whilst further information is sought, particularly whether there is a more energy efficient alternative.
- (b) Tree work – Bracken Close. Following an inspection by the tree surgeon of Council owned trees in Bracken Close, the following work was recommended at a cost of £600 plus VAT:

- Norway maple – Closest tree to No. 60. Remove x 2 lower branches overhanging cul-de-sac, remove x 3 lower branches to east overhanging property driveway, remove deadwood, sever climbing Ivy at base of tree and clear from stem to 2 metres high. Remove adjacent saplings from around base of tree.
- Ash – Centre tree Remove lower deadwood Sever climbing Ivy at base of tree and clear from stem to 2 metres high.
- Norway maple – Closest tree to No. 56. Remove limb to north overhanging street headlamp, remove branch to north-west and prune remaining north facing side of crown where necessary, sever climbing Ivy at base of tree and clear from stem to 2 metres high.

The Committee RECOMMENDED that this work be approved.

(c) Tree work – Alvescot Road Recreation Ground. It had been reported by Thames Valley Police that trees are obscuring the CCTV camera view of benches where youths congregate. The tree surgeon recommends the following be carried out at a cost of £700 plus VAT:

- Whitebeam & Cherry Prune branch spread overhanging footpath back to hedge line.
- Multi-stemmed Sycamore Remove low and subsiding branches overhanging footpath to approximately 7 metres high.
- Cherry group (x 3 trees). Raise canopy height of group overhanging footpath to approximately 4.5 metres high, prune remaining spread overhanging footpath back to verge closes to car park, sever climbing Ivy at base of tree and remove from stems to a height of 2 metres.

The Committee RECOMMENDED that this work be approved.

(d) Replacement bench – Willow Meadows. The last remaining wooden bench at Willow Meadows needs attention or replacing. To replace it with a Glasdon Elwood Enviropol Recycled Material bench (to match the benches we already have around the town and at Willow Meadows) would cost £741.42 plus VAT.

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the new bench as described above be approved.

(e) New bench – Pampas Close Playground. Installation of a small bench being sited on the play park. The play area does not currently have anywhere for parents/carers to sit while their children play. The tree gives a nice, shaded area for the bench to be positioned.

The Committee RECOMMENDED that the bench be approved.

23 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting. Confidential item follows.

CONFIDENTIAL

24 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The confidential items from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 June 2022, previously circulated, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

The Meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

Chair